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CROSS-SECTORAL CONCERNS INCLUDING INTERSECTORAL LINKAGES

Note by the secretariat

• The Plan of Action identified four cross-sectoral concerns which are particularly relevant for ECE work and which have, therefore, to permeate all its activities. The progress made in respect of two of them - sustainable development and gender mainstreaming - is reported below.

• Intersectoral cooperation has been developed in two cases: Transport and Environment; Energy and Environment. In addition, most of the PSBs have integrated the sustainable development dimension in their activities. The Commission may wish to invite the Committee on Environmental Policy to review all the activities related to sustainable development as discussed in this note and make suggestions to each PSB and to the Commission for a more systematic approach at the ECE level.

• Gender mainstreaming in all programmes of work of the UN organizations is a request emanating from the fourth World Conference on Women which has been further developed and strongly emphasized by the Agreed Conclusions adopted by ECOSOC at its 1997 substantive session. While gender mainstreaming in the ECE programme of work as established by PSBs is still uneven, the Commission

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intends to pursue the process and extend it to those areas which have not yet succeeded in doing so. In view of the General Assembly's request that the regional commissions provide, within their mandates, regional inputs to the 2000 review of the implementation of the Platform for Action, member States may wish to convene a meeting of experts at the intergovernmental level which would review economic issues, problems and policies relating to the situation of women in ECE countries over the past five years.

1. The Plan of Action identified four cross-sectoral concerns which are particularly relevant for ECE work and which have, therefore, to permeate all its activities. The progress made in respect of two of them - sustainable development and gender mainstreaming - is reported below.

I. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Environment

2. The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) plays the key policy role in furthering pan-European cooperation on the environmental component of sustainability. All the activities included in its programme of work promote the regional implementation of Agenda 21. Its work is organized around three pillars: the Environment for Europe process; the environmental performance reviews; and the environmental conventions.

(a) Environment for Europe

3. The Ministerial Conferences provide political impetus to the "Environment for Europe" process which is recognized as the major long-term pan-European political framework for the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. The Committee on Environmental Policy and the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution prepared much substantive input to the fourth Ministerial Conference (Århus, June 1998), which was endorsed, adopted or welcomed by the Ministers. The implementation of the decisions taken needs to be followed up and progress reported to the next conference in Kiev (Ukraine) in 2002. In this perspective, the CEP was requested to continue to screen the Environmental Programme for Europe, thereby promoting priority actions to be undertaken on a pan-European level. The Ministers also decided that an ad hoc working group of senior officials for the preparation of the 2002 conference, serviced by the ECE secretariat, should be convened two years before the conference.

4. In addition to this catalytic role for the process as a whole, ECE is directly involved in the following components of the outcome of the Conference:

(i) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. This Convention was prepared under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy and signed in Århus by 35 member States and the European Community. The first meeting of the Signatories to the Convention, open to all ECE member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, will be organized in April 1999. It will prepare a concrete work plan for the coming years for approval by the Committee at its sixth session.

(ii) Policy Statement on Energy Efficiency. The Århus Conference endorsed this statement and welcomed the Guidelines on Energy Conservation in Europe submitted by the CEP. The Guidelines are intended to assist ECE member countries, particularly countries in transition, in the elaboration and implementation of national, regional and local energy efficiency policies and their better integration into energy, environmental, economic and social development strategies. The Committee on Sustainable Energy, through the Steering Committee for the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, participated in the development of the Guidelines. The Århus Conference also endorsed a strategy, submitted by the Committee on Environmental Policy, to phase out leaded fuel in Europe. The Committee, at its fifth session, decided to establish mechanisms to review the implementation of these decisions taken by Ministers in Århus and to prepare follow-up reports to the next ministerial conference.

(iii) Recommendations to Governments of ECE countries in transition on the application of economic instruments for better integrating environmental policy with sectoral policies. The Ministers welcomed these recommendations which were submitted by the CEP and resulted from a joint ECE/OECD endeavour. As a follow-up, preparations started for an ECE/OECD Workshop on Enhancing the Environment by Reforming Energy Prices, to be held in 2000 in the Czech Republic.

(iv) The CEP also transmitted to the Århus Conference the proceedings of the Workshop on Encouraging Local Initiatives Towards Sustainable Consumption Patterns, recommendations to ECE Governments prepared thereof, and reports on the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe and the ECE Guidelines on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making.

(b) Environmental Performance Reviews

5. The ECE continues to develop Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) for countries in transition. EPRs include a series of preparatory missions addressing environmental issues in a wide range of policy areas and culminate in a peer review making recommendations which are subsequently followed up. The EPRs of Lithuania and Latvia were concluded with the Peer Reviews by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its 1998 annual session. The final reports are being published in the Environmental Performance Reviews Series. The review of Ukraine entered into its final phase after the organization of the review mission in Kiev in October 1998; the Peer Review is planned in September 1999. The review mission of the Croatian EPR project is planned for March 1999 and the EPR of Kyrgyzstan started in February 1999, with the preparatory mission. The ECE secretariat is cooperating with OECD on the review of the Russian Federation.

6. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its fifth session, decided to initiate a programme to improve the integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies. Based on the experience at national and international levels, a high-level group of governmental officials is expected to be entrusted with the preparation of a set of policy recommendations to ECE Governments, in the form of guidelines or a charter. The outcome would be presented for adoption at the next ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" in 2002.

(c) Environmental Conventions

7. Following its success in developing and implementing the five existing protocols, the Executive Body of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution agreed to prepare three new ones: on persistent organic pollutants, on heavy metals, and on nitrogen oxides and related substances. The first two protocols were adopted and signed at Århus. The third, on nitrogen oxides and related substances, has a multi-pollutant, multi-effect approach, which requires much scientific input, and is envisaged for 1999. The Executive Body focuses, furthermore, on implementation of and compliance with existing agreements, effect-oriented activities, long-range atmospheric transport monitoring, and integrated assessment modelling.

8. The first meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context took place, at ministerial level, in Oslo, in May 1998. The Parties established a work plan for the implementation of the Convention with emphasis on legal, administrative and methodological aspects of its practical application, strengthening the capability of countries with economies in transition to comply with its obligations, and promotion of bilateral and multilateral agreements on EIA.

9. The activities on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes focus on five priority programme areas: joint bodies; assistance to countries with economies in transition; integrated management of water and related ecosystems; land-based pollution control; and water supply and human health. In addition, field projects are under way on monitoring and assessing transboundary waters in 12 countries, and work continues on the improvement of laboratory management and accreditation procedures.

10. The activities under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents concentrate on: building capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, in particular in countries in transition through two ECE regional coordinating centres established under the Convention; developing a programme for the prevention of accidental transboundary water pollution; developing a procedure for identifying hazardous activities; testing the ECE Accident Notification System; and preparing the first meeting of the Parties.

Transport

11. The ECE Inland Transport Committee provides a significant contribution to sustainable development. The work of the Committee is aimed at the achievement of an efficient and well balanced inland transport system in the ECE region, a most basic requirement for the economic development of ECE member countries and for their integration in the European and global economy, while at the same time improving the safety and environmental performance of such a transport system. The Committee improves the environmental performance of the transport sector through both the reduction of the environmental impacts of road transport and the promotion of transport modes which are more environmentally sound. This is done through the development of international Agreements and Conventions which are legally binding for the countries which become Contracting Parties to them. Examples of legal instruments having a major impact on the environmental components of the transport sector are the 1958 Agreement on the construction of vehicles, which includes regulations on vehicles' gaseous and noise emissions, the Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, which helps prevent environmentally damaging transport accidents, and the AGC, AGN and AGTC agreements, which promote the development of rail, inland water and combined transport, respectively.

Statistics

12. Because of the substantial statistical work on sustainable development which is being done by OECD, Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division, the Conference of European Statisticians has no expert group devoted to that topic. However, topics relating to sustainable development are

frequently discussed in other environmental forums of the Conference. For example, the group of experts which deals with methodological issues of environment statistics will this year discuss how basic statistics, green accounting and statistical indicators can contribute to policy decision towards sustainable development. The priority areas of that group, which are issues related to the development of concepts, definitions and classifications common to all environmental media and the assurance of compatibility of these with economic data, are also important in sustainable development.

Human settlements

13. Further integrating the sustainable development dimension into its programme of work is a major direction for the Committee on Human Settlements and is reflected in its activities as follows.

14. At its fifty-ninth session in September 1998, the Committee selected urban governance as an umbrella topic for all programme activities in view of its role in sustainable human settlements development through strengthening democratic and multi-purpose local government and the involvement of citizens through various forms of public participation in the decision making process. Preparations are under way for workshops on urban governance and on sustainability aspects of urban transport to be held in the year 2000.

15. The Meeting of Officials on Land Administration, a subsidiary body of the Committee, addresses the issue of sustainable development through its activities on promotion of a formal system of land and property laws that ensure long-term internal confidence among people, enterprises and governments. Through a series of workshops, it has developed a set of recommendations to ECE Governments on setting up multi-purpose land registration and cadastre systems with registers containing information on the use of real property, which is essential for the decision-making process on environmental protection matters, economic efficiency, promotion of sustainable financial markets and taxation systems.

16. As a follow-up to the Workshop on Encouraging Local Initiatives Towards Sustainable Consumption Patterns, organized jointly with the Committee on Environmental Policy in 1998 in Vienna, the Committee on Human Settlements, at its fifty-ninth session, decided to undertake the preparation of case studies on environmentally sound urban and regional transport management coordinated with sustainable land-use planning. Their assessment would: (i) identify partnership arrangements which could be recommended to ECE Governments in their action towards sustainable consumption patterns; (ii) identify barriers (e.g. regulations planning, economic and fiscal disincentives) which need to be dismantled to promote sustainable consumption initiatives at the local level; (iii) demonstrate how central/local level cooperation on sustainable

consumption issues promotes urban governance including public participation and awareness.

Timber

17. Sustainable development of the forest and timber sector is at the very heart of the programme of the Timber Committee. Since UNCED in 1992, the focus of the Committee's work has been clearly and explicitly on "monitoring and analysis of sustainable forest management in the region". Contributing to sustainable forest management, notably the UNCED follow-up and the pan-European ministerial process on protection of forests in Europe have "over-riding priority" in the integrated work programme with the FAO European Forestry Committee. The Timber Committee's activities in support of sustainable development of the forest and timber sector contain the following major components:

(i) Maintenance and improvement of the information base, including data on the forest resource (the forthcoming Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource assessment 2000 - TBFRA - covers all aspects, including biodiversity, protection status, forest condition etc. as well as traditional parameters such as forest area growing stock increment and harvest), on production and trade of forest products, and conditions on forest products markets, etc. This includes constant review of concepts and improvement of the availability of the information;

(ii) Participation in efforts to define and collect data on indicators of sustainable forest management. ECE provided most of the data on the these indicators for the Ministerial Conference at Lisbon in June 1998;

(iii) Studies of the outlook for the sector, notably for the balance between supply and demand for forest products and the implications for forest policy;

(iv) Providing a forum for discussion of major issues linked with sustainable forest management, e.g a proposed seminar on trade and environment issues in the forest sector;

(v) Input to policy discussions, e.g. a paper by a team of specialists on "people, forests and sustainability" which was the foundation of the Lisbon resolution on socio-economic aspects of sustainable forest management.

18. From the cross-sectoral point of view, information generated by the Timber Committee, especially in the context of TBFRA, is input to analysis of other sectors (e.g. on climate change, under the Kyoto Protocol, or the "forest" part of the OECD environmental indicators) and the Committee

expressly considers the consequences of policy decisions in other fields, such as energy or environmental policy on the sustainability of the forest and timber sector.

Industry and enterprise development

19. ECE activities in the steel and chemical sectors have a strong environmental dimension. With regard to steel, the programme "Metallurgy and Ecology" provided the framework for organizing seminars on issues such as steel recycling, clean technologies in the steel industries, utilisation and disposal of wastes in the steel industries. Several publications in the same field include "Directory of the steel industry and the environment" and "Restructuring of the Iron and Steel Industry - Impact of New Technologies". In 1999, the biennial publication on "Metallurgical scrap" will be updated. In May 1999, a seminar jointly organized by ECE and IAEA on "Radioactive contaminated metallurgical scrap" will take place in Prague, aiming at harmonizing international regulations and detection and monitoring systems.

20. Environmental aspects of chemical industry are addressed through the ECE regional programme (Chemical Industry Sustainable Ecological and Economic Development) which includes the following elements: Pilot Project Demonstrating the Environmental Cleanup of Selected Sites Contaminated by Chemicals; Compendium of Soil Cleanup Technologies and Soil Remediation Companies; Seminar on Analysis, Methodology of Treatment and Remediation of Contaminated Soils, April 1999; CHEMLEX Databank on Chemical Legislation in the ECE Region (CD-ROM).

21. Most of these projects are oriented to assisting countries in transition to improve environmental standards, introduce best practices in their production, improve competitiveness and harmonize legislation and standards so as to minimize non-tariff trade barrier accusations.

Sustainable energy

22. Energy will be the central theme of the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). All United Nations entities dealing with energy issues are invited to contribute within their areas of expertise, the main track being the elaboration of a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development prior to CSD-9. The ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy intends to be part of this process by adopting a set of most relevant regional policy issues and recommendations (2000) to be submitted to CSD-9 for deliberations. Furthermore, a high-level senior Meeting on Sustainable Energy is under consideration to be held in 2000, prior to CSD-9.

23. Energy efficiency, an issue directly related to sustainable development, is a major component of the work of the Committee. The EE 2000 project

entered successfully into its third phase (1997-2000). At its last session in October 1998, the Committee organized a high-level round table on "How the Energy Industries Will Response to Kyoto Requirements". Project proposals on mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions have been developed, some of them already financed.

24. A three-year Project for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Energy Systems has been developed and financed by the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). The Project is expected to enhance the energy efficiency, infrastructure and capacity of five east European and CIS countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Ukraine). It will focus on specific initiatives in three areas: municipal lighting, hospitals and district heating. The specific objectives are to develop, finance and implement energy-efficient projects as well as to improve energy-efficiency policies in the above five countries.

25. Two other areas related to sustainable energy can be highlighted: (i) promoting clean coal technology for electricity generation in economies in transition; and (ii) promoting the use of renewable energy through relevant technologies and financial mechanisms. For both areas, seminars have been organized by ECE in countries in transition.

Intersectoral activities: Transport and Environment

26. As a follow-up to the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 1997), the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment took place in July 1998 to consider, in particular, the status of implementation of the Programme of Joint Action, the role of the lead countries/bodies and national focal points and the future work of the Joint Meeting. The Programme of Joint Action is intended to be implemented during the next ten years. The Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the Inland Transport Committee as well as the major international organizations involved in Transport and Environment participated in this first meeting.

27. In order to advance the follow-up process and to prepare the second Joint Meeting on Transport and Environment, the ECE secretariat is performing the following tasks: (i) completing the list of National Focal Points and preparing a reporting mechanism which will facilitate exchange of experiences and best practices; (ii) preparing guidelines for the report of the Lead Actors on international activities; (iii) establishing a data base on the information provided by the National Focal Points and the Lead Actors; (iv) preparing proposals for the Joint Meeting on priority areas so as to focus the follow up process on those issues which have the strongest impact on the environment and which are of common interest to a good number of countries.

28. The Committee on Environmental Policy is cooperating with WHO/EURO, through a jointly established European Environment and Health Committee, in the preparations for a third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to take place in London from 16 to 18 June 1999. The Conference is expected to adopt a protocol on water and health to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, a charter on transport, environment and health and a ministerial declaration. The Committee on Environmental Policy will analyse the Conference's outcome in September 1999 and cooperate/participate in follow-up activities jointly or in close cooperation with WHO/EURO.

II. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Environment

29. In this area, gender concerns have been expressed within the framework of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. NGOs active on gender equality issues participated in the preparatory meetings and their advocacy led to the integration of the principle of gender equality in the preamble of the Convention.

Transport

30. The Working Party on Transport Statistics made a first step in gender-mainstreaming by agreeing to include in the Common Questionnaire for Transport Statistics a gender breakdown in transport sector employment. Subsequently, data were published for the first time in the ECE Annual Bulletin of Transport Statistics for Europe and North America in 1996. In an effort to incorporate a gender perspective into other aspects of its programme of work, the Working Party asked the secretariat to collect from Governments relevant gender-specific transport data other than those already collected by the Common Questionnaire. In March 1998, the secretariat requested such data from ECE member countries and replies were received from Belarus, Latvia and the Russian Federation.

Statistics

31. Gender statistics has been recognized as a special field of statistics in the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians with its own objectives, outputs and activities. As a relatively new field, gender statistics has been given increased attention and resources and expert meetings have been organized regularly by the Conference at approximately 2-3 year intervals since 1985. The last meeting took place in April of 1998 and focussed on unpaid work and economic well-being and career mobility over a lifetime. By offering a gender forum to statistical offices, the Conference

has played an active and important role in institutionalizing gender statistics and mainstreaming gender into the work of many national statistical offices.

32. Gender has also been mainstreamed, with a particular focus on the political participation of women in member countries, into the ECE Yearbook Trends in Europe and North America prepared by the Statistical Division. A new major gender publication is also being prepared in collaboration with national statistical offices, which will assess progress since the last World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Economic analysis

33. Each year the Economic Survey of Europe includes a subsection on unemployment in transition economies where gender specific unemployment rates and shares are also analysed. In the forthcoming survey 1999, No.1, a full section on female employment and unemployment will be included in the chapter on labour markets - covering Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Russian Federation. Another chapter will consider the extent to which the economic impact of transition could explain the generally falling birth rate in these economies, as measured by the number of children a woman may expect to have in her lifetime. This analysis will also consider the way in which women's roles have changed in the transition, the degree of support for child care facilities, how and to whom child benefit is paid, and the present situation with regard to maternity leave.

Trade, industry and enterprise development

34. In the field of trade, it has been more difficult to incorporate gender aspects in the programme of work. Some possibilities exist in the work relating to investment promotion and enterprise development and the secretariat plans to request approval from the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) for a project to obtain more participation by non-governmental organizations which work with women in trade-related fields in the ECE region. The project would consist of researching and identifying such NGOs and then sending them an invitation letter together with an information package on the Division's work programme together with a calendar of meetings. In addition, the CTIED has requested that resources be shifted to a new horizontal work programme in the enterprise development area where it may be somewhat easier to incorporate a gender perspective into some of the projects, and particularly any related to management.

Timber

35. The role of women in the forest and forest products sector has attracted very little attention in developed countries, with the exception of the Nordic countries (although there is a large literature on the role of women in sustainable forest management in developing countries). Thus the issues are not clear and even basic information is lacking. In recognition of this fact, the Timber Committee, with its sister body the FAO European Forest Commission, has started to explore the topic. At their joint session in 1997, the special topic was "the role of women in forestry (with two presentations, country reports and a discussion). Thereafter the team of specialists on socio-economic aspects of forests, in its work for the third Ministerial Conference on the protection of Forests in Europe (June 1998), addressed this issue, which was subsequently identified in a resolution of the Ministerial Conference. A seminar on the topic of "Women in forestry", under the auspices of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training will be held in Portugal in 2001. Some interviews of women forest owners have been conducted and their outcome will soon be published in a discussion paper.

Human settlements

36. The Committee on Human Settlements has seriously considered gender mainstreaming and is committed to the integration of gender perspectives it in its programme of work whenever possible. This applies in particular to the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable policies, including infrastructure development, and the promotion of equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making. It is expected to initiate case studies aimed at contributing to strengthening policies and practices in this area.

37. As an illustration of the commitment of the Committee, the Eighth Conference on Urban and Regional Planning has taken up the issue of gender equality, as shown in its report which states: "Gender issues and inequalities do not always attract enough attention in the development of urban communities. Usually urban planning does not take into account the difference in behaviour and the implications for urban life of the massive integration of women into the labour market. Women are more affected by the negative impacts of spatial urban development, which manifests itself in a dispersal of activities, inadequate transport, environmental degradation etc."

Seminar on Implementing Economic and Social Rights of Women in Countries in Transition, Warsaw, October 1998

38. This event was organized by the NGO Working Group on Women in the ECE region, in partnership with the ECE secretariat and the Warsaw Centre for the

Advancement of Women. It covered the following themes: impact of transition and globalization on women's economic and social rights; women's access to waged employment and to self employment in the countries in transition; and interrelationship between rights to employment and social rights. The seminar showed that in most of the countries with economies in transition, women bear most of the hardships and, in order to secure basic support to the family, are obliged to take lower paid jobs and move from the formal sector to the informal sector. The participants therefore underlined the need to provide women with greater access to economic and social rights, which requires that gender concerns be integrated into the corresponding policy areas. It was also stressed that the process of shaping policies and measures having a gender impact should include consultations with women NGOs in order to take their views and experiences into consideration.

2000 review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

39. The ECE is planning to hold a meeting gathering together the UN and non-UN organizations active in issues of women's advancement and gender equality in the ECE region. The meeting will review the progress made and obstacles met in the work of participating agencies in this area (data collection, analysis and operational activities).

40. ECOSOC and the General Assembly have encouraged the regional commissions to organize, within their mandate, events providing a regional input to the 2000 review of the Beijing Platform for Action. In response to this, ECE member States may wish to convene a meeting of experts at the intergovernmental level which would review economic issues, problems and policies relating to the situation of women in the ECE countries.